



OUTCOME FOCUSED CULTURAL  
ASSET ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY  
LEARNING TOOL

Prepared by



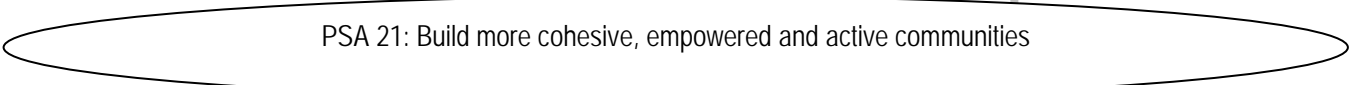
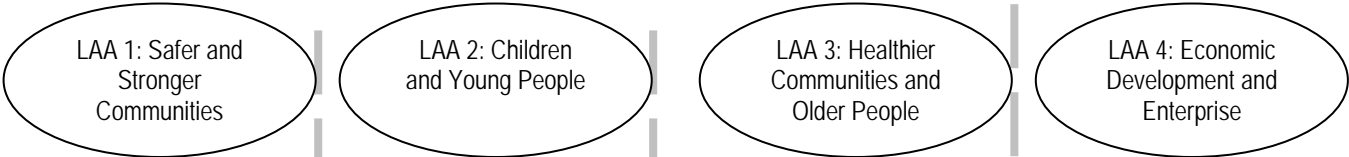
## **1.0 ASSET ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

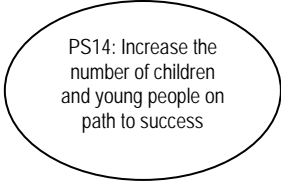
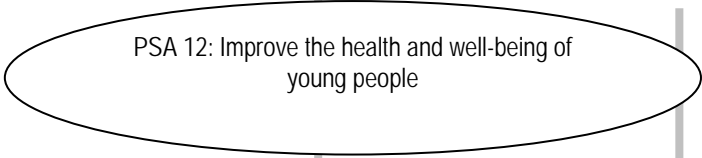
The aim of the following methodology is to provide a tool-kit to assist in increasing understanding amongst partners and stakeholders of the contribution made by each asset to the achievement of strategic objectives, national indicators, and a balanced cultural offer. Expecting all assets to meet a diverse range of objectives is unrealistic, it is more appropriate to consider how a balanced portfolio of assets can assist in achieving the objectives of stakeholders, local and national government. The approach must encourage stakeholders to identify the value of each asset in isolation and how it contributes to cultural provision as part of a cohesive cultural 'offer'. This methodology is designed to assist stakeholders in identifying the contribution made by assets to strategic priorities. The long-term output of using a critical methodology, such as that proposed below, is a balanced cultural offer, which encourages consumption and maximises strategic benefit.

### **1.2 Strategic Context for the Methodology**

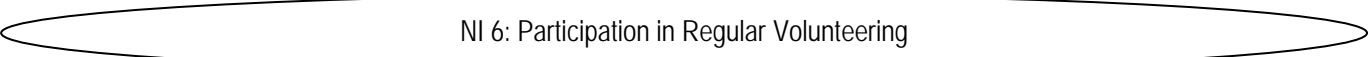
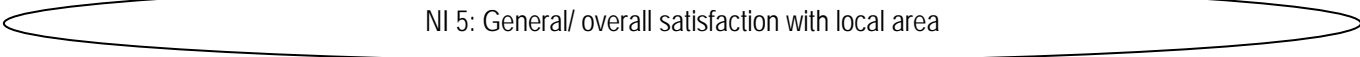
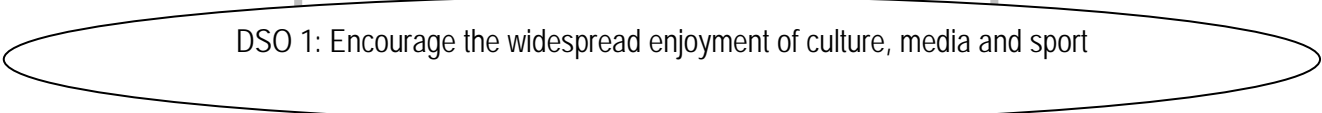
The methodology is designed to effectively link the existence and activities of a cultural asset to the strategic priorities of a geographic area. This is demonstrated in the diagram below:



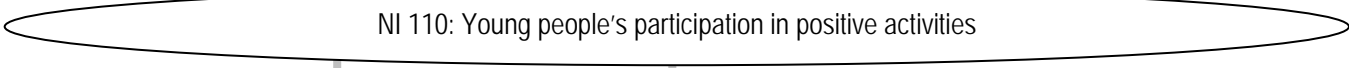
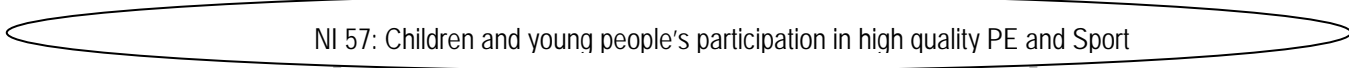
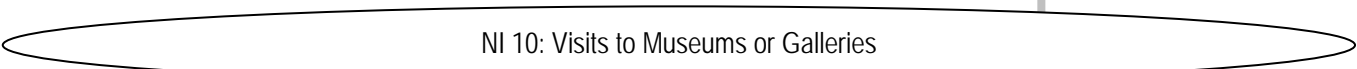
PSA  
Targets



DSO  
Targets



National  
Indicators



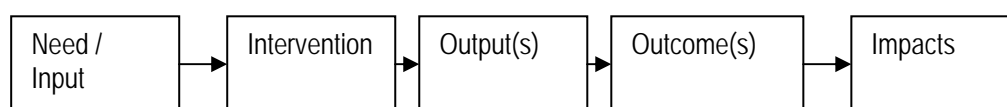
By considering what and how an asset provides / delivers services, and contributes to the achievement of National Indicators, we can understand how it contributes to local and national government priorities. By undertaking this process, we can then understand the real value of an asset, beyond user / visitor numbers.

### 1.3 Assessment Methodology

The following presents the assessment process through which stakeholders can review and evaluate their assets. The methodology could be used for the following purposes:

- To develop an understanding of the contribution made by the asset to the cultural offer
- To identify the 'value' of the asset
- To identify strengths and weaknesses within the cultural offer
- To influence and guide investment priorities / decisions
- To inform service reviews

The methodology must consider the logic model of impact and identify the extent to which different levels of analysis can be undertaken. A generic logic model is presented below:



The need or input (i.e. provision and consumption of the cultural offer within a particular area in response to demand) will be a function of a number of factors, including:

- Responding to government priorities
- Responding to community need or perceived need
- Historic provision
- Availability of project revenue or capital funding (i.e. assets improved or enhanced as capital funding is available, not necessarily in response to strategic need)
- Lack of funding (i.e. assets reduced in scale or programme due to lack of resources)

Therefore, the current need / input, or intervention, i.e. asset base is a function of several drivers, some of which will be strategic in nature whilst others will be related to access to and availability of resources. Developing an understanding of the current cultural offer and its development to the existing state is the starting point for assessing assets, i.e. what do we have and why do we have it?

There is a drive within central government, and within sector specific agencies, e.g. MLA, to shift emphasis to outcomes based assessment. National Indicators provide a basis through which outputs can be measured in terms of engagement and to an extent satisfaction with services. In

developing an asset assessment methodology, we must consider the extent to which assets can be assessed, should they be assessed against:

- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Impacts

In practice, this will be answered by the data which exists and the resources which stakeholders have to undertake primary research. Additional research may be used to identify the impacts which the existence of or engagement with the cultural offer has had on the quality of life of individuals and communities.

As a starting point, outputs and where appropriate, outcomes should be the focus of assessment, however, organisations with substantial evidence bases should consider how impact assessments can be included in the process.

The difficulty in using impacts as the measure of success of the asset is the longitudinal nature and accrual of benefit. This process as a first step should therefore focus on the use and application of output and outcome data.

#### **1.4 Principles Underpinning Assessment Methodology**

In developing the assessment methodology it is important to establish a number of principles which underpin the process for data capture and the extent to which and methods through which data will be used.

We are primarily interested in what a particular library does, rather than what libraries as a concept provides or delivers. The user offer at Blackburn Central Library will be very different from a small rural branch library for instance and as such, we need to understand what a particular library provides, who it provides it for, and the outputs which it creates.

The methodology is based on existing data collection priorities and activities at present and as such the methodology has been designed to demonstrate how existing data can be used to assess the significance of key assets. That said, where required, consideration is given as to how the data collecting process can be extended to focus on issues which will demonstrate the significance of assets.

The focus of the methodology is on outputs rather than outcomes or impacts as outputs can be more effectively and easily measured. Outcomes and impacts are the aggregate of a variety of factors and it can be difficult to identify the attribution or unique contribution made by a cultural asset to an outcome or impact. In order to deliver an instructive and useful methodology, we must focus on identifying the attribution or contribution of the activities or existence of the asset to outcomes or impacts. We need to understand and quantify / qualify how the asset contributes to

benefit being secured. An important issue in this discussion is the key focus, and activities delivered by the asset and the outputs and benefits they deliver. The causal link between supply and effect is the key issue.

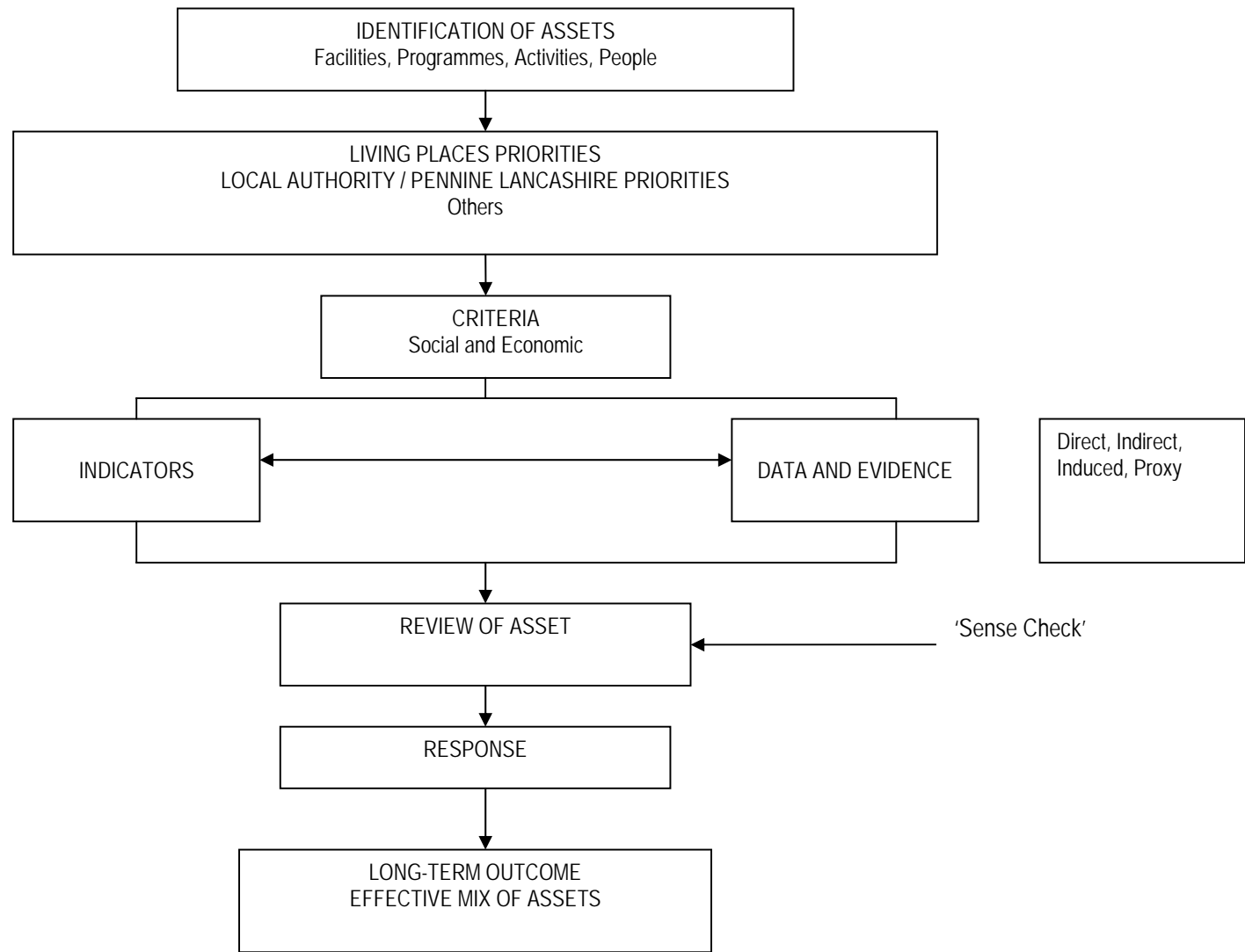
- Sports centres can demonstrate the number of attendances and participation at the site, and through research can demonstrate a direct causal link between attendance and improved health.
- Lending libraries on the contrary, although providing information which may assist in living a healthier lifestyle, do not deliver a measurable and quantifiable health benefit and as such this should not be a focus of the evaluation methodology. Libraries which provide programmes such as books on prescription may have an identifiable input and output, identified by research, however, this is due to a particular programme rather than the general activity of the library.

We must be able to demonstrate a strong link between the activity of the asset and an output.

Performance information provides a method through which importance or significance can be measured. Clearly, this information will focus on users behaviour and characteristics and does not consider the views of non-users or lapsed users. Suggested closure or downgrading of services often results in public concern and often campaigns to keep the asset open or avoid its downgrading. In many instances, these campaigns are supported by members of the community who do not currently or have never used or visited the asset. The assets make a contribution to an area and are valued by the community even if they are not used. This in part may be a lifecycle issue or may be more deep rooted however, it is clear that this issue should be considered in the assessment of assets.

## 1.5 Assessment Methodology

The following diagram presents an illustrative methodology of how stakeholders can assess assets.



## 1.6 Identification of Assets

The evidence base produced by Jura Consultants provides a comprehensive overview of assets in Pennine Lancashire which can be used as a starting point for the review process. In other geographic areas, stakeholders should list or map all cultural assets before beginning the asset assessment process. Stakeholders may be interested in reviewing the following:

- One asset
- A selection of assets
- All assets within its administrative area
- All assets which have an influence on the performance, or perception of the area

Mapping or listing assets will be the starting point and in some cases the maps may highlight assets which should be included in a review due to perceived duplication or overlap in services.

## 1.7 Strategic Context

The diagram at Section 1.2 above illustrates the linkage between National Indicators, Departmental Strategic Objectives and Local Area Agreement Outcomes. Using these linkages and the methodology, we can begin to understand the contribution made by cultural assets to the achievement of wider strategic objectives. Users of the methodology should develop their own chart to include relevant Local Area Agreement Outcomes and other relevant strategic priorities.

## 1.8 Assessing Asset Significance

The following criteria have been identified based on the measures of activity or success which can be measured or evidenced. A hierarchical structure is presented which links LAA outcomes to data (outputs) presented in PSA, DSO and LA indicator sets. For ease of reference, in with respect to Pennine Lancashire, the LAA outcomes are:

- 1 Safer and stronger communities
- 2 Children and Young People
- 3 Healthier Communities and Older People
- 4 Economic Development and Enterprise

LAA 1: Safer and Stronger Communities				
Criteria / Outcome / Impact	Indicator / Output	Data Source	Control Factor	Links to PSA, DSO, National Indicators
<p>Contributes to community cohesion</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Cultural Diversity</p>	<p>% of the user market by:</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Sex</p> <p>Ethnicity</p> <p>Religion</p> <p>Area of residency</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>% of programmes designed to attract particular target audiences</p>	<p>User information of asset</p> <p>Records of programming of asset</p> <p><i>Primary research – rate cohesion</i></p> <p><i>Rate contribution made by cultural asset – reasons</i></p> <p><i>What does <b>this</b> asset do that strengthens the community?</i></p>	<p>Profile of Local Authority area</p> <p>Profile of asset = profile of catchment = score of 5</p> <p>Location quotients could be used to assess profile of use against profile of community</p>	<p>NI 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11</p> <p>PSA 21</p>
	<p>% of adults who feel that they can influence decisions about the asset</p> <p>% of adults in terms of categories above who can influence decisions about the asset</p>	<p>Committees involved in managing / delivering services / programmes</p> <p>User information</p>	<p>Existence of groups which can assist / influence decisions</p> <p>Profile of groups = profile of catchment = 5</p>	<p>NI 6, 9</p> <p>PSA 21</p>
Contribution to sense of place	<p><b>Social Value</b></p> <p>Civic pride</p> <p>Non-user values placed on the asset</p> <p><i>Economic value</i></p> <p>As tourist attraction</p> <p>Existence value</p> <p>Willingness to accept</p>	<p>Survey – how important is this asset to your satisfaction with your area?</p> <p>Example – museum few people go to threatened with closure – outrage when consider closing. Has existence value and sense of place value</p>	<p>Use for comparison</p>	<p>NI 5</p> <p>PSA 21</p>

Contribution to a clustering of assets which provide a sense of place	Asset is one of several assets in a locality	Maps produced by this study		
<b>LAA 2: Children and Young People</b>				
<b>Criteria / Outcome / Impact</b>	<b>Indicator / Output</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Control Factor</b>	<b>Links to PSA, DSO, National Indicators</b>
Cultural engagement	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>% of the population who are children or young people</p> <p>% of young people participating in type of culture (e.g. sport, arts, museums etc) by children</p> <p>For each facility, penetration rate of use by local youth market (= number of users / young population)</p> <p>Compare penetration rates to identify most effective assets</p> <p>Compare penetration rate against % of all users</p> <p><b>Museums</b></p> <p>% of young people engaging in curriculum based learning</p> <p>% of young people engaged in leisure activities at the museum</p> <p>% of young people visiting in their own time</p> <p><b>Sports</b></p> <p>% of young people engaging in organized sporting activity</p> <p>% of young people engaging in self-organised sporting activity</p> <p>(classify as sports, then consider on sport by sport basis)</p>	<p>Over-arching principle is understanding penetration of an asset into the youth market. When people are engaged, there will be a first round benefit. When engaged, easier to develop additional rounds of benefit.</p> <p>Penetration rate = number of young users / young population</p> <p>Concept underpinning these indicators is understanding the percentage of the target market (i.e. children and young people) who engage with the asset</p>	<p>Location quotients</p> <p>Profile of use = profile of area</p> <p>e.g. 5% of people in area are aged 5-11. What % of young people use the asset?</p>	<p>NI 5,6 8, 9, 10, 11, 57, 110</p> <p>DSO 1</p> <p>PSA 21</p>

	<p><b>Arts</b> % of young people participating in arts programmes</p> <p>% of young people attending arts activities</p> <p><b>Libraries</b> % of young people who are members of the library</p> <p>% of young people who engage in activities delivered by the library</p> <p>% of young people who engage in curriculum based learning activity</p>			
<b>LAA 3: Healthier Communities and Older People</b>				
<b>Criteria / Outcome / Impact</b>	<b>Indicator / Output</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Control Factor</b>	<b>Links to PSA, DSO, National Indicators</b>
Healthy Communities	% of the population who have engaged in organised activity	User data of the asset and population information	Profile of users and community	PSA 21
	% of the population who have engaged in self-organised sporting activity	As above	As above	PSA 21
	% of the population who have had or have an extended relationship of using the asset	As above	As above	PSA 21
	% of the population who believe the asset contributes to the health of the community	As above	As above	PSA 21
<b>LAA 4: Economic Development and Enterprise</b>				
Economic development	% of users who travel into the local authority or local area to consume the asset	User statistics and area of residence  % of users from outside the local authority area used as proxy. Difficult to identify value of impact, however % of users from outside indicates attraction of asset and identifies scope to extend stay and generate further benefit	Do not take into account level of spend or impact	PSA 2
	Value of economic impact, if available	User statistics and economic impact appraisal	Compare impact	PSA 2

	Asset as an icon for the region, e.g. Halo Panopticon etc	Use in promotional material Critical acclaim	Subjective view	PSA 2
Positive Image	% of the population who believe the asset contributes to a positive image of the place	Survey to identify satisfaction or image of place Identify contribution of assets to positive image		PSA 21

A number of criteria or issues are not captured in the table above. In assessing the contribution or significance of an asset it will be challenging to conclude this using existing data sets due to the fact that data capture techniques do not focus on the contribution of an asset. Key criteria, which should be included but for which, additional data would be required are:

- Sense of Place
- Quality of Place / Distinctiveness
- Cluster Effects

To assess the significance of an asset to these criteria, community surveys would be required, which would ask the following questions:

- How satisfied are you with your local area?
- What contribution do the following assets make to your satisfaction with your area:
  - Museum
  - Library
  - Sport Facility
  - Arts Facility
  - Etc

An appropriate scale should be used to capture varying contributions across the cultural asset base and across types of asset, e.g. libraries, sports etc.

## 1.9 Application of the Methodology

Stakeholders should select the criteria they would like to consider the performance of the asset against and capture existing data. National Indicators should assist in this process. The outcome of the appraisal will lead to consideration of responses to the issues raised.

## 1.10 Response

The supply and demand mapping, alongside the assessment methodology will provide an evidence base against which development or improvement priorities can be identified. The following responses may be made:

### *High Performing Assets*

High performing assets can be shown to deliver against one or more strategic criteria. The response to the identification of a high performing asset may be:

- Status quo to maintain current activity
- Capital investment to extend and potentially diversify positive outputs
- Revenue investment to extend or diversify positive outputs

### *Low Performing Assets*

Further consideration and review is required to understand why assets are low performers. Illustrative examples of reasons for low performance may be:

- Significant perceptual barriers impeding access / engagement
- Community is completely disengaged
- Cultural activity and participation is focused on one area, e.g. sport, which is diverting users away from other forms of culture.
- Insufficient or inaccessible facilities
- Demands are not being met effectively

There are a number of responses to low performance including:

- Change the mix of assets and programmes
- Invest in new programmes to improve engagement
- Re-locate to more effective location

Capitalising on high performers and addressing the main factors creating low performers will remove issues which affect the effective relationship between supply and demand.

## 1.11 Long Term Outcome – Balanced Portfolio of Assets

On completion of the process, stakeholders will have the evidence base to understand the contribution made by each asset in its portfolio. The role of each asset will be defined, and scope

for development understood. Under provision, or lack of assets to deliver on key priorities will stimulate development projects.

## 1.12 The Methodology in Practice

### **Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery**

Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) is best known for being a treasure house of the Hart bequest, the unique collection of local notable Robert Edward Hart (1876-1946). His gift of coins, manuscripts and books cannot be matched by any public collection outside London and give the museum its international reputation. Opened in 1874 originally as a purpose built museum and library, the space is now entirely devoted to modern displays of Hart's treasures, the history of Blackburn, the Egyptian Mummy, South Asian culture, Fine and Decorative Art and the Bowdler collection of world beetles, among other sights. (Source: [www.blackburn.gov.uk](http://www.blackburn.gov.uk))

Data regarding the performance of BMAG was sourced from Blackburn with Darwen Council and these data have been used in piloting the methodology. An in-gallery visitor survey has been conducted continuously since April 2008 and this data has been used to populate the framework. The data covers the period April 2008 to August 2008 and includes 238 responses. For the purposes of this illustrative example, we will focus on LAA 1: Building Stronger Communities and a key priority within this is the creation and enhancement of community cohesion. Therefore, we will use the data provided by BMAG and the methodology to assess the extent to which BMAG contributes to community cohesion. The following table presents the available data against the criteria and indicators identified within the methodology.

The methodology compares the population profile of Blackburn with Darwen with the profile of BMAG to assess the extent to which the visitor profile is representative of the local community. To further illustrate the profile of BMAG and its performance, we have included visitor profile information for another significant museum in the north west.

TABLE 1.1 BLACKBURN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES			
Community Cohesion			Other NW
Indicator	Blackburn Profile	BMAG Profile	Museum
<b>Age</b>			
Under 5	7.7%	11.7%	5.0%
5-10	9.6%	20.4%	5.0%
11-15	8.0%	18.1%	4.0%
16-24	11.6%	12.5%	5.0%
25-54	40.7%	23.2%	33.0%
55+	22.4%	14.0%	44.0%
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	49%	40.0%	
Female	51%	60.0%	
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White/ White British	77.9%	72.9%	
Mixed Ethnic Background	0.9%	1.1%	
Asian / Asian British	20.6%	11.1%	
Black / Black British	0.2%	3.6%	
Other ethnic background	0.3%	1.1%	
Prefer not to say	n/a	10.4%	
<b>Area of Residence</b>			
Blackburn		68.8%	
Pennine Lancashire		17.3%	
Lancashire		12.2%	
UK		1.7%	
<b>Ability to influence use of the Asset</b>		Friends of Museum and Art Gallery	

The analysis indicates the following:

- BMAG attracts a disproportionate number of young people which is atypical of museum audiences
- BMAG attracts a culturally diverse visitor audience with substantial numbers of Asian and Asian British people
- Based on these figures, BMAG is a local museum for local people, with 69% of visitors being residents of Blackburn and 14% of visitors resident outwith Pennine Lancashire

We would argue that this analysis demonstrates that BMAG is / could be a significant asset in developing / extending community cohesion in Blackburn and across Pennine Lancashire. The data indicates that a broad cross section of the local population are comfortable visiting the museum and as such, this facility could be used for programmes to enhance cohesion, such as

inter-generational, inter-faith activities, which may, or may not be related to heritage or the collections of the museum.

Stakeholders could respond to this analysis in a number of ways, including:

- Use BMAG as focus for community cohesion activities
- Develop strategic connections across cluster of assets to 'share the benefit'
- Status-quo or do more of these activities or programmes to extend cohesion benefits
- Develop the tourism potential through investment

In reality, BwDBC is currently developing a capital project to extend and enhance the Museum. This will serve to attract visitors to Blackburn and provide an enhanced facility for the local population.